

# Standards of Living

## Purpose

Students will compare the standard of living of various countries of Europe and the Americas today using Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita as an indicator.

## Materials

*For the teacher:* 2 pieces of chart paper, markers, copy of Black Line Master (BLM) *Sample GDP Calculation Chart*, index card for each student, sculpting dough, chalk, chalkboard

*For the students:* enough sculpting dough to make 2 small sculptures, copy of BLM *Real-Life Comparisons*, pencil

## Activity

### A. Pre-Activity Preparation

1. Copy the BLM *Sample GDP Calculation Chart* onto each piece of chart paper.
2. Create a production card for each student by writing “1” on one quarter of the index cards, “2” on one half of the cards, and “3” on the remaining one quarter of the cards. Place all the “1” cards and half of the “2” cards into one pile and the rest of the cards into a second pile.
3. Write the following on the chalkboard: jeans, doll, book, bananas, skateboard, and canned vegetables. Create a sculpting dough sample of each product.

### B. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Ask students: “Is our *standard of living* in the United States – the availability of goods and services and people’s ability to obtain them – the same as in all other countries?” Have students explain their opinions.
2. Explain to students that one way to measure a country’s standard of living is to look at its *Gross Domestic Product (GDP)*.
3. Explain to students that the Gross Domestic Product is the value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a year. Clarify that *GDP per capita* means the GDP for each person.

### C. GDP Simulation

1. Divide the class in half and tell students that each group will

## Technology Literacy Standards

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	X	X	X	X		X	X
2	X	X	X			X	X
3	X					X	X
4		X				X	X
5						X	
6		X		X		X	
7						X	
8						X	
9						X	
10						X	
11				X		X	
12						X	
13				X			
14						X	
15				X			
16							

**X** = This Technology Literacy Standard is addressed in this lesson.

= This Technology Literacy Standard is not addressed in this lesson.

- represent a country.
2. Direct students' attention to the list on the chalkboard, show them the sample products, and explain that they will create some of the products listed on the chalkboard to represent their country's total production for a year.
  3. Hand out sculpting dough and an index card to each student. Make sure that all the members of a country receive cards from the same pre-sorted group.
  4. Tell students that the numbers on their cards indicate the number of goods each student should produce and instruct them to begin. Stop them after ten minutes of production.

#### **D. GDP Calculation**

1. Post the copies of the BLM *Sample GDP Calculation Chart*.
2. Tell students that they will use the chart paper to calculate their country's GDP.
3. Guide the class to agree on the price of each item, record the prices on the charts, and help each group calculate their country's GDP.
4. After the GDPs have been calculated, have students determine which country has the highest GDP and which country's standard of living is the highest.
5. Guide students to discuss connections between GDPs and standards of living.





#### **E. Real-Life Comparison**

1. Tell students that they will answer questions based on the GDPs of real countries. Hand out the BLMs *Real-Life Comparisons* and instruct students to complete their BLMs.
2. Have students discuss and debate numbers 3 and 4 on their BLMs when they have finished.

### **Questions for Review** ---

#### **Basic Concepts and Processes**

As students discuss their BLMs *Real-Life Comparisons*, ask them:

-  What is a Gross Domestic Product?
-  Which country on the BLM *Real-Life Comparisons* has the highest GDP?
-  Which country on the BLM has the highest standard of living?
-  Explain why GDPs can be used as an indicator of standard of living.

# Sample GDP Calculation Chart

Good	Number Produced	Price	Revenues
Jeans			
Banana			
Skateboard			
Doll			
Book			
Canned Vegetables			

# Sample GDP Calculation Chart

## Teacher Directions

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Copy the chart from the BLM *Sample GDP Calculation Chart* onto each piece of chart paper.

Guide students to use the sculpting dough, product list, and index cards to create products that represent their country's production for the year.

Stop student production after 10 minutes, as you post the Gross Domestic Production Calculation Charts. Tell students that they will be using the charts to calculate their country's GDP. Help the teams agree on the price of each item, and record the prices on the charts. One at a time, help the countries complete their GDP Calculation Charts. After the GDP of both countries has been calculated, have the students determine which country has the highest GDP. Ask the students to explain which country's standard of living is the highest based on their GDP. Guide the students to fully understand this concept by helping them connect the number and type of sculptures produced with the numbers on the chart.

## Answer Key

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Charts will vary according to the prices that students agree upon and the amount and type of sculptures students create. Below is a sample chart.

Gross National Product (GNP) Calculation Chart

Good	Number Produced	Price	Revenues
Jeans	8	\$12.00	\$96.00
Banana	6	\$3.00	\$18.00
Skateboard	3	\$10.00	\$30.00
Doll	7	\$6.00	\$42.00
Book	5	\$8.00	\$40.00
Canned Vegetables	4	\$3.00	\$12.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Real-Life Comparisons*

### **Per capita GDPs, in dollars, for the year 2000:**

United States (\$36,200)  
Suriname (\$3,400)  
Luxembourg (\$36,400)  
Brazil (\$6,500)  
Spain (\$18,000)

Honduras (\$2,700)  
Germany (\$23,400)  
Portugal (\$15,800)  
Argentina (\$12,900)  
Uruguay (\$9,300)

United Kingdom (\$22,800)  
Mexico (\$9,100)  
Belgium (\$25,300)  
Ecuador (\$2,900)  
Canada (\$24,800)

1) List the countries in order from the country with the highest GDP to the country with the lowest GDP.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

2) List the countries in order from the country with the highest standard of living to the country with the lowest standard of living.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

3) What similarities or differences do you see between the two lists above? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Explain the reason for these similarities or differences. \_\_\_\_\_

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# Real Life Comparisons

## Teacher Directions

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Tell students that they will be answering questions based on the GDPs of countries in Europe and the Americas as you pass out the BLMs *Real Life Comparisons*. Instruct the students to read the directions carefully and to complete their BLMs. Circulate as the students work and guide them to justify their answers.

When the students have completed their BLMs *Real Life Comparisons*, select a student to read his or her GDP list, number 1 from his or her BLM. Record the list on the board as you encourage the students to debate the list until a consensus is reached. Repeat this process with the standard of living list. Have the students also discuss and debate numbers 3 and 4 on their BLMs.

\*\*If the GDP information on the BLM *Real Life Comparisons* needs to be updated, go to The World Factbook's Web site at [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook), and click on the country name, then "Economy" to locate the most recent GDP per capita.

## Answer Key

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- 1) List the countries in order from the country with the highest GDP to the country with the lowest GDP.

1. Luxembourg
2. United States
3. Belgium
4. Canada
5. Germany
6. United Kingdom
7. Spain
8. Portugal
9. Argentina
10. Uruguay
11. Mexico
12. Brazil
13. Suriname
14. Ecuador
15. Honduras

- 2) List the countries in order from the country with the highest standard of living to the country with the lowest standard of living.

1. Luxembourg
2. United States
3. Belgium
4. Canada
5. Germany
6. United Kingdom
7. Spain
8. Portugal
9. Argentina
10. Uruguay
11. Mexico
12. Brazil
13. Suriname
14. Ecuador
15. Honduras

- 3) Students should note that the lists are in the same order.

- 4) Students should explain that GDPs can be used as an indicator of a country's standard of living, and thus the higher the GDP, the higher the standard of living.